

Sam's Learning Lab

Enhanced Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy

1. Introduction

Sam's Learning Lab is fully committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all children and young people in our care. This policy applies to all staff, tutors, contractors, and volunteers. It is informed by:

- The Children Act 1989 and 2004
- **Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2025**
- Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018, updated 2023)
- Prevent Duty (2015)
- GDPR and the Data Protection Act (2018)
- Guidance from Local Safeguarding Children Partnerships (LSCPs)

We aim to ensure that all children, regardless of age, ability, race, religion, gender identity, or background, are protected from harm.

2. Core Principles

- The welfare of the child is **paramount** at all times.
- All children have an equal right to protection.
- Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility.
- Early intervention is crucial to prevent harm.
- Safeguarding must be child-centered and rights-based.
- Confidentiality is respected, but safeguarding concerns **override** non-disclosure.

3. Safer Recruitment and Vetting

All tutors and staff at Sam's Learning Lab must undergo a robust recruitment process:

- Completed application form and comprehensive CV.
- **Enhanced DBS check** (issued within 1 year or subscribed to the Update Service).
- Two written references, verified directly by management.
- Verification of ID, current address, right to work, and academic qualifications.
- Signed safeguarding self-declaration form.

Records of these checks are stored securely in our **Single Central Record (SCR)**, which is audited biannually.

4. Code of Conduct & Professional Boundaries

All tutors and staff must:

- Uphold professional standards and act as positive role models.
- Strictly avoid private messaging or social media connections with students.
- Maintain clear boundaries (e.g., no personal gifts, no contact outside of scheduled sessions).
- Ensure all communication involving students is professional and, where possible, includes a parent or guardian.
- Avoid situations where they are alone with a child unless within defined safeguarding protocols (e.g., online lessons monitored by parents).

5. Working Environment and Safety

5.1 In-Person Sessions

- Must take place in open, observable spaces (e.g., a dining area or study room).
- A parent or responsible adult **must** be present on the premises for the duration of the session.
- Sessions in public spaces (e.g., libraries) require prior written parental consent and a safety risk assessment.

5.2 Online Tutoring

- Use approved, secure platforms with waiting rooms enabled.
- Parents must be informed of session times and granted access to join or observe.
- Sessions may be recorded (with explicit written parental consent) for safeguarding and quality assurance.
- Tutors and students must use neutral backgrounds, wear appropriate attire, and maintain professional behavior.

6. Recognising and Responding to Abuse

6.1 Types of Abuse

- **Physical:** Hitting, shaking, or causing physical harm.
- **Emotional:** Verbal abuse, bullying, or humiliation.
- **Sexual:** Coercion or involvement in sexual activities.
- **Neglect:** Failing to provide for basic physical or emotional needs.
- **Child-on-Child Abuse:** Including online bullying and harassment.
- **Grooming / Exploitation:** Including online risks and radicalisation (Prevent).

6.2 Early Help and Thresholds

We support families through early help pathways and will escalate concerns to local social care authorities if a child is deemed at risk.

6.3 How to Respond

1. **Listen** without judgment.
2. **Avoid leading questions**; allow the child to speak freely.
3. **Record** the disclosure using the child's exact words.
4. **Do not promise secrecy**—explain that you must tell someone who can help.
5. **Report immediately** to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL).

7. Reporting and Escalation Procedures

7.1 Internal Reporting

Concerns must be reported to the DSL or Deputy DSL immediately using the Sam's Learning Lab safeguarding incident form. Records are stored securely and separately from academic files.

7.2 External Referrals

Serious concerns or allegations are referred to the **Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)**. In an emergency, staff must contact the police or social services directly.

7.3 Allegations Against Staff

All allegations are handled in accordance with LADO guidance. Staff or subcontractors will be suspended pending investigation where necessary. Records of allegations are retained securely, even if found to be unsubstantiated.

8. Training and CPD

- **Level 1 Safeguarding Training:** Mandatory for all tutors before starting work.
- **Refresher Training:** Required every 2 years.
- **DSL Training:** Level 3 Safeguarding, updated every 2 years.
- **Prevent Training:** Mandatory for all staff to recognise signs of radicalisation.

9. Safer Culture and Whistleblowing

We promote a transparent culture where concerns about colleague behavior can be raised without fear of reprisal. Whistleblowing concerns can also be directed to the **NSPCC Whistleblowing Helpline: 0800 028 0285**.

10. Prevent Duty & Online Safety

Tutors must remain alert to signs of extremism or online grooming and promote safe internet practices, encouraging students to report any inappropriate contact encountered online.